

Strategy – Targeted CMV Speed Enforcement as a Generalized Deterrent to Speeding Motorists

General Description

Many motorists take their cues as to the presence or absence of (speed) enforcement from what the ‘truckers’ are observed to be doing. The perception is that truckers communicate via CB radios and other devices to inform other truckers of the presence of speed traps. When drivers of passenger vehicles observe a sudden decrease in the speed of trucks, it is usually taken as an indication that speed enforcement is present. Conversely when truckers are exceeding posted speeds the drivers of other vehicles feel it is ‘safe’ to do so also (i.e., not likely to be ticketed). “So go the trucks, so go the other elements of the traffic stream.” The generalized benefit of slowing down the trucks is a concurrent reduction in the speed of other vehicles as well.

How can ticketing trucks for speeding be made even more effective in controlling the speeds of the traffic stream in general? It used to be a generally recognized fact that ‘troopers’ in North Carolina generally did not stop trucks except in cases where a driver’s behavior was clearly a danger to others on the road. Part of that has been due to the average trooper not knowing ‘what to do with a truck’ (i.e., how to check for proper credentials, how to check a logbook for hours of service violations, how to inspect for proper load securement, what to do specifically with a tanker truck, or truck carrying hazardous materials, etc.)

Until recently NCSHP troopers were not cross-trained in commercial vehicle operations. Now that the commercial motor vehicle enforcement section (formerly under the NCDOT Division of Motor Vehicles) resides under the NC State Highway Patrol and, from the standpoint of visual roadside appearance, is indistinguishable from the typical SHP trooper, the perceived presence of CMV enforcement on North Carolina roads has significantly increased since the Jan 2003 merger. Now any black and silver enforcement vehicle is perceived as a potential commercial motor vehicle enforcement officer.

Based upon these facts, North Carolina has a two-fold opportunity to develop an *effective speed enforcement strategy*. The key elements of such a strategy include:

- Full cooperation of the ‘trooper’ and motor carrier elements of the NC State Highway Patrol,
- Capitalizing upon the generalized speed reduction effect associated with motorists modeling their (speed) behavior after what the trucks are observed to be doing and
- Increasing the likelihood of trucker compliance with posted speeds (irrespective of the real or perceived presence of enforcement) by instituting a program that says

“If you (a trucker) are stopped for speeding in North Carolina, you . . .

- ✓ Will be cited
- ✓ Will be convicted as charged (no PJC’s or reduced charges)
- ✓ Will be subject to a ‘full’ (Level I) roadside inspection, and where appropriate placed ‘out of service’
- ✓ Will be subject to be weighed by a motor carrier officer at the roadside on portable scales and subject to overweight penalties in addition to the costs associated with the speeding violation.

Technical Attributes

Target	The target of this strategy is all drivers on all roadways, including both passenger and commercial motor vehicles.
Expected Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A reduction in mean vehicle speeds consistent with the reduction in commercial motor vehicle mean speeds in those areas where active enforcement is in effect.• A reduction over time in the mean CMV speeds independently of the presence/absence of enforcement. <p>A corresponding reduction in the mean and 85th percentile speeds of non commercial motor vehicles.</p>
Keys to Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A high level of CMV speed enforcement• Effective adjudication of CMV speed violations in the courts• Continued permitted use of CB radios as a means by which the presence of enforcement is detected and communicated to elements upstream of the active area of enforcement.• The frequent consequence of (CMV operator) having to undergo a full (Level I or II) inspection when stopped for speeding.• The frequent occurrence of also having to be weighed by a certified motor carrier officer in conjunction with issuance of a speeding ticket.• A public information/awareness campaign that sends the message to truckers operating in and/or passing through North Carolina that says:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ You (trucker) will be stopped for exceeding the posted speed limit in North Carolina▪ You will be cited for driving in excess of the posted speed▪ You will be subject to a full roadside inspection and placed out of service where appropriate▪ You will be subject to be weighed at the roadside and to incur strict monetary weight penalties.
Potential Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate enforcement manpower (for passenger vehicle as well as CMV speed enforcement)• Adverse reaction from trucking industry• ‘Spot’ treatment effectiveness versus more widespread change in vehicle speeds.• Consistency of adjudication. Consistent support of DA’s, prosecutors, etc.• If citations for CMV speeding violations do not result in a level of associated driver/vehicle inspections that says to truckers ‘we mean business.’
Appropriate Measures and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spot speed studies across the state.• Crashes involving vehicles traveling faster than the speed limit.
Associated Needs	<p>Cooperation of the State Highway Patrol</p> <p>Cooperation of the judicial system in processing these types of violations.</p>
Organizational, Institutional, and Policy Issues	A change in the way these types of citations/violations are processed within the courts will be needed.
Issues Affecting Implementation Time	This program should have a relatively short start-up time.
Costs	Cost would be minimal unless special enforcement was utilized requiring the dedication of troopers above and beyond their normal duties.
Training	There is little training that will be required for this program other than education of the courts, judges and district attorneys in regards to the special focus and emphases being placed on these types of citations and why.
Legislative Needs	There is no legislative activity required for this program.